



DENTAL THERAPISTS INCREASE DENTAL ACCESS & CREATE JOBS

Vote YES for SB 684 by Sen. Brandes and HB 649 by Rep. Plasencia

DENTAL ACCESS IS LIMITED

In Florida, access to dental care, especially for low-income Floridians, is very limited. In 2016, total Florida hospital charges for dental conditions NOT related to an accident were more than one-half billion dollars.¹

- A total of 166,997 visits were to emergency rooms for which the total charges were over \$322 million. For almost 40% of the visits, Medicaid was the primary payer.
- A total of 4,307 people were admitted to the hospital for dental conditions not related to an accident which cost more than \$195 million.
- Medicaid was the primary payer for 23% of those admitted; 30% were paid by private insurers and Medicare was 24%.

Waiting until a dental problem warrants a trip to the emergency room is dangerous for a patient and not cost effective. Because ER physicians do not have dental training or equipment, patients are, many times, given an antibiotic and a painkiller which does not address the underlying dental problem.

PART OF THE SOLUTION - LICENSED DENTAL THERAPISTS

HB 649 and SB 686 create an educated and licensed mid-level dental professional to supplement, not replace, the work of dentists. By increasing the number of trained dental professionals in the workforce, we can expand access to care and lower ER visits for dental issues. The proposal:

- Requires graduation from a three-year program approved by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) – the only independent accrediting body for all dental professionals recognized by the U.S. Department of Education;²
- Establishes the licensure, examination, continuing education and disciplinary structure for dental therapists;
- Requires licensed dental therapists to maintain medical malpractice coverage and to take a certain amount of continuing education;
- Allows but does not mandate Florida dentists to employ or contract with these licensed professionals; however, dental therapists may only practice under a Florida licensed dentist; and
- Requires a dental therapist to enter into a collaborative management agreement with a dentist and allows the dentist to choose (1) the specific services the dental therapist may provide and (2) the level of supervision they are under.

STATUS OF DENTAL THERAPY ACROSS THE GLOBE

Licensed dental therapy is not a new concept. Sixty countries allow dentists to hire dental therapists to extend care into communities with limited access. Currently five states allow dentists to hire a dental therapist and, as a result, have experienced expanded access to dental care without a decrease in patient safety or quality of care. Further, approximately 15 states are advancing or will advance proposals for the licensure of these mid-level providers.

More than 1,000 studies and assessments regarding the care rendered by dental therapists - in the U.S. and across the world – have found that the quality of care delivered is at least equal to that of a dentist for the procedures they have in common.³

Supporters of Licensed Dental Therapists (as of March 15, 2019)

<i>Alachua County Commission</i>	<i>Healthcare Network of Southwest</i>
<i>Alachua County Oral Health Coalition</i>	<i>Health-First</i>
<i>Bond Community Health Center</i>	<i>Heart of Florida</i>
<i>Brevard Health Alliance</i>	<i>Hillsborough County Commission</i>
<i>Broward Community & Family Health Centers</i>	<i>James Madison Institute</i>
<i>Catalyst Miami</i>	<i>Keys Area Health Education Center</i>
<i>Center for Oral Health</i>	<i>League of Women Voters of Florida</i>
<i>Central Florida Health Care</i>	<i>Marion County Hospital District</i>
<i>Children's Services Council of Palm Beach</i>	<i>Miami Dade College</i>
<i>Children's Volunteer Health Network</i>	<i>Munroe Regional Health System</i>
<i>Community Health Center of Florida</i>	<i>North Florida Medical Centers, Inc.</i>
<i>Florida Allied Dental Educators</i>	<i>Oral Health Florida</i>
<i>Florida Association of Children's Hospitals</i>	<i>Palm Beach County Commission</i>
<i>Florida Association of Community Health Ctrs</i>	<i>Palm Beach County Oral Health Coalition</i>
<i>Florida Chamber of Commerce</i>	<i>Palms Medical Group</i>
<i>Florida Dental Hygienists' Association</i>	<i>Partnership for Child's Health</i>
<i>Florida Legal Services Inc.</i>	<i>Premier Community HealthCare</i>
<i>Florida Policy Institute</i>	<i>Suncoast Community Health Centers</i>
<i>Florida Public Health Association</i>	<i>Suwannee River Area Health Education Center</i>
<i>Florida Rural Health Association</i>	<i>The Children's Movement of Florida</i>
<i>Florida Voices for Health</i>	<i>United Way of Florida</i>
<i>GNV4ALL</i>	<i>United Way of North Central Florida</i>
<i>Greater Tampa Bay Oral Health Coalition</i>	
<i>Head Start State Collaboration Office</i>	

¹Tomar, S. Hospital Emergency Department & Hospital Inpatient Admissions in Florida for Non-Traumatic Dental Conditions, 2015 and 2016. Unpublished research.

²CODA, Accreditation Standards for Dental Therapy Educational Programs. 2015; https://www.ada.org/-/media/CODA/Files/dental_therapy_standards.pdf?la=en

³David A. Nash et al., "A Review of the Global Literature on Dental Therapists in the Context of the Movement to Add Dental Therapists to the Oral Health Workforce in the United States (April, 2012). <http://www.nationaloralhealthconference.com/docs/presentations/2012/05-01/David%20Nash.pdf> Also, Wetterhall, S. et. Al, "Evaluation of the Dental Health Aide Therapist Workforce Model in Alaska: Final Report," October 2010. <https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2010/10/alaska-dental-therapist-program-rti-evaluation-report>

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Floridians for Dental Access Website: <http://floridiansfordentalaccess.com/>